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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS.

EXHIBITION

OF

DRAWINGS, WATER COLORS, AND ENGRAVINGS

BY

WILLIAM BLAKE.

ARRANGED IN THE FIRST PRINT ROOM.

JUNE, 1880.



BOSTON:

ALFRED MUDGE & SON, PRINTERS,

34 SCHOOL STREET.

1880.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

1757-1827.

READERS of English poetry have long been familiar with some lovely and elusive lyrics by William Blake, which have appeared in various anthologies. The Golden Treasury, for example, has one of the best known of these, "The Piper,"

"Piping down a valley wild";

and "The Tiger,"

"Tiger, tiger, burning bright,"

has a singularly tenacious hold upon the memory. Every once in a while mention would be made of the extraordinary man who wrote these lyrics, and was known to have designed some strange picture. Allan Cunningham included his name in his *Lives of Painters*, but it was not until 1863 that anything like a full account appeared of a painter and poet who has since that time had a marked influence in English and American art. "The Life of William Blake," begun by Alexander Gilchrist, and finished by his widow with the

generous aid of the Rossetti brothers, Dante Gabriel and William Michael, was published then by Macmillan in London, in two liberally illustrated octavo volumes. "Pictor Ignotus" was the title given to Blake in that book, and it had been the labor of the author and editors to recover the facts in the life and work of a man whose contemporaries and friends were still living, but who himself, dead for thirty-five years, had led almost a hidden life in London at the time when Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb among writers, and Fuseli and Stothard among designers, were conspicuous and successful. The book excited great interest, not only from its revelation of a singularly beautiful life, but from its containing a full collection of Blake's poems, a number of reproductions of his pictorial work, and a careful list of the known examples of his art. Artists and others in England had already begun to search for his works, and those who had owned copies without recognizing their importance brought them out from their hiding-places. A mania for Blake sprang up, which gave a sudden commercial value to his art, and what was more important, artists and students began to scrutinize closely the methods which he used and the expressions of his power. Costly experiments of reproduction of his rarer works were made, and a literature of annotation and interpretation began to be formed. The sudden mania for Blake has perhaps subsided as a merely fashionable craze, but there remain the more significant inquiry and study which recognize in him an original and unique genius.

Blake is taking his place as one of the few Englishmen who have made positive additions to the realm of art, and while the waywardness of his genius and the limitations which he imposed on himself will never allow him to be popular, there is no reason to doubt that his works will constantly receive special attention for certain qualities which are rare and found only in the greater masters.

It has been common to speak of him lightly as the mad artist, and there have been curious speculations as to his sanity. There will continue to be such speculations so long as people are not agreed in what sanity consists, but while these are indulged in by some, others will continue to take an honest and healthy delight in the products of Blake's genius, when these appeal to their sense of intelligence and their perception of spiritual forces. Genius is apt to baffle us, and it is not always easy to distinguish between a mere enigma and an occult truth; but the attentive observer of these pictures who uses patience, humility, and a seeing eye, will not fail to be rewarded. One must bear in mind that Blake lived so constantly in the presence — real, at any rate to him — of spiritual beings, as to lose the sense of their strangeness, and to forget that what was plain to him needed interpretation to others. He sought to record simply and directly what he saw, but it is not at first easy for one to place himself at the same angle of vision.

Gilchrist's *Life*, with its illustrative passages from Blake's writings, is still the most complete account which

we have of this singular man. There have been many briefer sketches, based chiefly on the book, and W. M. Rossetti furnishes a life as an introduction to an edition of his poems (published in this country by Roberts Brothers, Boston). Mr. C. E. Norton prefaced a heliotype reproduction of the Book of Job with an essay on Blake, and *Scribner's Monthly* for June 1880 contains the most recent and accessible statement of his work. The present collection is the first which has been attempted in this country, and was occasioned by the temporary deposit here of a number of pictures by Blake belonging to Mrs. Alexander Gilchrist. The fact that the number of purchasers of Blake's original works was small and confined chiefly to the wealthy connoisseur class in London, accounts for the necessarily small collection of his works which could be made in America.

CATALOGUE.

*The Water Colors, Drawings, etc., are arranged in the first
print room.*

1. Drowned Bodies washed up by the Sea. Design
cut on pewter.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

- turned out to 5*
2. Mother watching over a Sleeping Child. From
the Butts collection. Gilchrist's Life, No.
184.

Oil color.

E. W. Hooper.

- turned out to 3*
3. Nebuchadnezzar. From the Butts collection.
Gilchrist's Life, No. 13.

*lobster shell
long hair*

Color-printed and touched by Blake.

Henry Adams.

4. A Husband parting from his Wife and Child,
Assassins lurking behind. Gilchrist's Life,
No. 230.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

5. Man at an Anvil talking to a Spirit. Gilchrist's Life, No. 49.

Color stamped.

H. E. Scudder.

6. Visiting the Sick. Gilchrist's Life, No. 133.

India ink.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

7. The Death of the Good Old Man.

Designed by Blake for Blair's "Grave." Engraved by L. Schiavonetti.

R. C. Waterston.

8. Color Sketch for same.

R. C. Waterston.

9. The Soul entering Eternity. Gilchrist's Life, No. 92.

India ink.

H. E. Scudder.

10. Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims.

Painted in fresco by Blake, 1808, and engraved on copper by him. Gilchrist's Life, Vol. I. p. 225, No. 78.

H. E. Scudder.

11. The Mourners. Gilchrist's Life, No. 134.

India ink.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

12. Moses by the River Brink.

Engraving.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

13. Joseph of Arimathea among the Rocks of Albion,
with curious inscription.

Engraved by Blake in 1773, but not his design.

H. E. Scudder.

14. Infant Joy, from "Songs of Innocence and
Experience." 1789.

Water color.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

15. The Parable of the Sower: Christ as the Good
Farmer. Gilchrist's Life, No. 76.

India ink.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

16. Elijah mounted in the Fiery Chariot. Gilchrist's
Life, No. 21.

A stamped print colored. Inscribed fresco.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

- 17 Dr. Young burying his Daughter (Narcissa).
Gilchrist's Life, No. 102.

India ink.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

18. "But hope rekindled, only to illume
The shades of death, and light her to the tomb."
Gilchrist's Life, No. 210. See also Vol. I.
p. 225.

Water color.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

19-40. Illustrations of the Book of Job.

Invented and engraved by William Blake; twenty-two proofs.

The original drawings, "Inventions to the Book of Job," were executed by Blake for Mr. Butts in the years 1823-25, when he was from sixty-six to sixty-eight years of age. They were engraved and published in 1825. Gilchrist's Life, Vol. I. p. 282.

H. E. Scudder.

Title-page.

- (1.) Thus did Job continually.
- (2.) When the Almighty was yet with me, When my Children were about me.
- (3.) Thy Sons & thy Daughters were eating and drinking.
- (4.) And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.
- (5.) Then went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord.
- (6.) And smote Job with sore Boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.
- (7.) And when they lifted up their eyes afar off.
- (8.) Let the Day perish wherein I was Born.
- (9.) Then a Spirit passed before my Face, the hair of my flesh stood up.
- (10.) The Just, Upright Man is laughed to scorn.
- (11.) With Dreams upon my bed, thou scarest me & affrightest me with Visions.
- (12.) I am Young, & ye are very Old, wherefore I was afraid.

- (13.) Then the Lord answered Job out of the Whirlwind.
- (14.) When the morning Stars sang together & all the Sons of God shouted for joy.
- (15.) Behold now Behemoth which I made with thee.
- (16.) Thou hast fulfilled the Judgment of the Wicked.
- (17.) I have heard thee with the hearing of the Ear, but now my Eye seeth thee.
- (18.) And my Servant Job shall pray for you,
- (19.) Every one also gave him a piece of Money.
- (20.) There were not found Women fair as the Daughters of Job.
- (21.) So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.

41. Job and his Three Daughters. Gilchrist's Life, No. 63.

Pencil drawing.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

42. "Every one also gave him a piece of money." Gilchrist's Life, No. 73.

Pencil drawing for the Book of Job.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

43. The Book of Thel, 1789.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

44. The Echoing Green. "Songs of Innocence."

Stamped print colored.

E. W. Hooper.

45 to 56. Twelve plates from Blair's "Grave."

Designed by Blake and etched by L. Schiavonetti.

E. W. Hooper.

- (1.) Frontispiece. 1808.
 (2.) Christ Descending into the Grave.
 † (3.) The Meeting of a Family in Heaven.
 (4.) The Counsellor, King, Warrior, Mother, &
 Child in the Tomb.
 (5.) Death of the Strong, Wicked Man.
 (6.) The Soul hovering over the Body, reluctantly
 parting with Life.
 (7.) The Descent of Man into the Vale of Death.
 (8.) The Day of Judgment.
 (9.) The Soul exploring the recesses of the Grave.
 (10.) The Death of The Good Old Man.
 (11.) Death's Door.
 † (12.) The Reunion of the Soul & the Body.

57. Portrait of William Blake.

Etched by L. Schiavonetti, after a painting by T.
 Phillips, R. A.; from Blair's "Grave."

E. W. Hooper.

58. Children and Sheep.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

59. Body surrounded by Flames.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

60. Descent into Hell.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

61. Man raising himself from a Cleft in the Earth.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
62. Three Figures in Distorted Attitudes. Gilchrist's
Life, Vol. I. pp. 106-108.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
63. Three Nude Figures: one standing, and two
reclining.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
64. Figure of a Young Man with Arms raised.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
65. Woman standing amid a Group of Children.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
66. Female Figure.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
67. Female Figure.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.
68. Group of three Female Figures in Clouds.
Water color.
E. W. Hooper.

69. Group of six Female Figures in Clouds.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

70. Kneeling Figure. Gilchrist's Life, p. 113.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

*h. Open-mouthed
+
his*

71. Body at the Bottom of the Sea. Gilchrist's Life,
p. 113.

E. W. Hooper.

72. Swan bearing a Man through the Air.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

73. Death's Door.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

74. Two Female Figures, kneeling.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

75. Man meditating; two Small Figures hovering
near.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

76. Resurrection.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

77. Christ and the Dead.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

78. Female Figure, kneeling, and kissing a child.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

79. *Long Legged*
Spirit of the Sea.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

80. Three Figures sitting by the Sea, Figure hovering over.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

81. Three Figures seated under Trees.

Water color.

E. W. Hooper.

82. Little Tom, the Sailor. A poem or ballad by Mr. Hayley, with two cuts.

Done on pewter (1800) and printed charitably with great success. It is inscribed, "Printed for and sold by the widow Spicer, of Folkstone, for the benefit of her orphans." This was a project set on foot by Hayley to "help the necessities of a meritorious woman," which Blake entered warmly into. To save all expense, he and Mrs. Blake printed the sheets themselves. It is now very scarce indeed, and consequently highly valued.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

83. Plate 8, from "Sir Charles Grandison." Miss Byron visiting Miss Emily Jervoise.

Designed by Stothard; engraved by Blake, 1780.

R. C. Waterston.

84. Adam and Eve over the body of Abel.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

85. Leaf from "Jerusalem," a work written by Blake.

Printed in color.

H. E. Scudder.

86. Man supporting the Trunk of a Tree on his Shoulder.

Designed by Stothard; engraved by Blake.

R. C. Waterston.

87. Cornelius Nepos.

Engraved by Blake, 1795.

R. C. Waterston.

88. Catullus.

Engraved by Blake, 1795.

R. C. Waterston.

89. Adam naming the Beasts. Gilchrist's Life, No. 39. Intended for frontispiece to "Hayley's Ballads."

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

90. Rev. John Caspar Lavater, of Zurich. 1741-1801.

Engraved by Blake.

R. C. Waterston.

- 91-96. Illustrations to Gay's "Fables." Six plates from the edition of 1793.

Designed and engraved by Blake.

R. C. Waterston.

- 97-102. Illustrations to a Collection of English Songs, 1783. Six plates.

Designed by Stothard; engraved by Blake.

R. C. Waterston.

103. Scene from the "Beggars' Opera."

Painted by Hogarth, 1729. Engraved by Blake, 1788. Early impression of the etching. Unfinished.

R. C. Waterston.

104. The same.

Finished engraving, with key.

Gray collection.

105. Plate 12, from "Sir Charles Grandison." Grandison's Interview with Clementina and her Mother.

Drawn by Stothard; engraved by Blake.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

106. Plate 2, from "A Sentimental Journey." The Dance of the Peasants.

Drawn by Stothard; engraved by Blake.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

107. Portrait of Democritus, after Rubens.

Engraved 1789, for Lavater's "Physiognomy."

R. C. Waterston.

108. William Cowper. From a crayon portrait, drawn from life by Romney, in 1792.

Engraved by Blake for Hayley's "Life of Cowper," 1802.

R. C. Waterston.

- ✓ 109. Tornado. From a drawing by Fuseli.

Engraved by Blake, 1795.

R. C. Waterston.

- ✓ 110. Fertilization of Egypt. From a drawing by Fuseli. Published in Darwin's "Botanic Garden."

Engraved by Blake, 1791.

R. C. Waterston.

111. Plate 9, from "Sir Charles Grandison." Duel in the Parlor.

Drawn by Stothard; engraved by Blake.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

112. Portrait of William Blake.

Engraved by W. C. Edwards, after T. Phillips, R. A.
Published 1830.

R. C. Waterston.

113. Mrs. Q(uintin).

Drawn by Huet Villiers. Engraved by Blake, 1820.

R. C. Waterston.

for June

X 114. Morning, or Glad Day.

Engraving.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

115. Sketch of a Shipwreck, after Romney.

Engraved by Blake, 1809.

This scene represents a horseman at the Cape of
Good Hope rescuing persons from shipwreck.

R. C. Waterston.

116. From "America." A Prophecy written by
Blake. 1793.

Stamped print colored.

Gray Collection.

117. Adam and Eve recumbent, hovered over by
Angels. Gilchrist's Life, No. 101.

Pencil drawing.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

118. Sketch for "The Last Judgment."
Pencil drawing.
Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.
119. Man and Woman under Trees, in attitude of adoration. Gilchrist's Life, No. 220.
Water color.
Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.
120. The Parent's Blessing.
Water color.
H. E. Scudder.
121. Figures ascending.
Pencil and brush outline.
E. W. Hooper.
122. Sketch for design of dedication to Blair's
"Grave." Gilchrist's Life, No. 20.
Water color.
Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.
123. Two Angels.
Pencil sketch.
Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.
124. "And pity, like a naked, new-born babe." Gilchrist's Life, No. 113.
Pencil drawing.
Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

125. Sketch for the "Jane Shore." Gilchrist's Life,
No. 1.

Pencil drawing.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

126. Five Visionary Heads of Women. Gilchrist's
Life, No. 21.

Pencil drawing.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

- 127-129. Two water-color studies by Blake for the
plate, "The Descent of Man into the Vale of
Death," from Blair's "Grave"; with the en-
graving by Schiavonetti.

R. C. Waterston.

- #
130. A Strong Man rescuing a Woman and Child
from a Conflagration. Gilchrist's Life, No. 16.

Water color.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

131. Eve and Satan. Gilchrist's Life, No. 82.

Pencil drawing.

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

BOOKS.

132. "The Triumphs of Temper," by Wm. Hayley.
London, 1803.

Engraved by Blake, after the designs of Maria Flaxman.

133. Hayley's "Life of Cowper." Vol. II. Chichester, 1803.

Head of Cowper, engraved by Blake, after Sir Thos. Lawrence.

R. C. Waterston.

134. "Works, Days, and Theogony" of Hesiod.
London, 1817.

Frontispiece engraved by Blake, from Flaxman's design.

R. C. Waterston.

135. Homer's "Iliad." London, 1805. "Homer invoking the Muse."

Engraved by Blake, after Flaxman's design.

R. C. Waterston.

136. "Fables," by John Gay. London, 1793. The Tame Stag.

Designed and engraved by Blake.

R. C. Waterston.

137. Songs of Innocence. 1789.

E. W. Hooper.

138. Aphorisms on Man. Translated from the original of Lavater, by Fuseli. London, 1789.

Frontispiece. Engraved by Blake, after Fuseli, 1788.

R. C. Waterston.

139. Ritson's "English Songs." London, 1783. 2 vols. Woman seated by the sea, watching a body washed ashore. From Vol. I.

After Stothard. Engraved by Blake.

R. C. Waterston.

140. Drinking Song, from the same. Vol. II.

Engraved by Blake, after Stothard.

R. C. Waterston.

141. Young's "Night Thoughts."

Illustrations designed and engraved by Blake. Published in London, 1797.

The Last Trump.

E. W. Hooper.

142. The same design, engraved by Schiavonetti for Blair's "Grave."

Mrs. Alex. Gilchrist.

ENGRAVINGS.

143. Johannes Warren de Poynton.

Engraved by James Basire, with whom Blake served an apprenticeship of seven years, from 1771.

R. C. Waterston.

144. Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury.

Engraved by James Parker, after Stothard. (Parker was Blake's partner in early life. Parker & Blake was the firm in 1784.)

R. C. Waterston.

145. Gowrie's Conspiracy.

Engraved by James Parker, after Stothard.

R. C. Waterston.

146. The Novel.

Engraved by James Parker, after Northcote.

R. C. Waterston.

147. St. Cecilia.

Engraved by James Parker, after Stothard.

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